

**DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE****Legal Office**

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**GUIDELINES FOR ACCESS TO PUBLIC RECORDS**

Public records maintained by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (“CDFA”) are available for public inspection according to the following procedures:

1. Records are available for inspection during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
2. Requests for inspection or copying of public records:
  - A. Should be specific, focused, and not interfere with the ordinary business operations of CDFA. Where a request is not specific and focused, CDFA staff will assist the requester to identify the requested information, describe the technology or physical location of the record, and provide suggestions on how to overcome practical barriers to disclosure. The operational functions of CDFA will not be suspended to permit inspection of records during periods in which CDFA personnel, in the performance of their duties, reasonably require such records. If the request requires review of numerous records, a mutually agreeable time should be established for the inspection of the records.
  - B. Should sufficiently describe the records so that they can be identified, located, and retrieved by CDFA personnel.
  - C. Can be made orally or in writing, but the CDFA encourages written requests unless the request seeks records that are maintained by CDFA for immediate public inspection.
3. CDFA may refuse to disclose any records that are exempt from disclosure under the Public Records Act. (See e.g., Gov. Code Sec. 6254 *et seq.*)
4. Inspection of records will be allowed upon conditions determined by CDFA. Upon either the completion of the inspection or the oral request of CDFA personnel, the person conducting the inspection shall relinquish physical possession of the records. Persons inspecting CDFA records shall not destroy, mutilate, deface, alter, or remove any such records from CDFA’s premises. CDFA reserves the right to have CDFA personnel present during the inspection of records in order to prevent the loss or destruction of records.
5. Copies of records that are not exempt from disclosure are available upon pre-payment of the costs for copying (twenty cents [20¢] per page). Actual costs for postage and packaging may also be charged. There is no charge for inspection of records.
6. These guidelines shall be posted in a conspicuous public place in CDFA’s offices, and a free copy shall be provided upon request.

April 2006